

Earthquake Report - JAIF

We have been reporting a status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station by summarizing news aired by NHK, which is Japanese national broadcasting company. We regard it as most credible news among many news sources and we are happy to say that NHK's English website has gotten enriched and now you can see movies and English scripts at <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/daily/english/society.html>. Given this situation, we decide to simply place these scripts as it is for the record in case that it will be deleted from the website later, rather than summarizing news as we did.

No. 111: 18:00, June 13

NHK news regarding status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station yesterday and today.

(Fukushima NPP Site)

- **Test-run to be delayed at Fukushima**
- **TEPCO to test water treatment system**
- **Excessive levels of strontium detected in seawater**
- **Water treatment device fixed**
- **Measures to prevent heatstroke to be added**

(Other news)

- **Expert: Closer watch on marine life necessary**
- **Off-site centers unprepared**

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●Test-run to be delayed at Fukushima

Tokyo Electric Power Company has further postponed the test-run of a new system to treat highly radioactive water that threatens to overflow from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. The operator says it wants to conduct the test-run on Tuesday or later -- more than 4 days behind schedule.

TEPCO had initially planned to start the test-run of the water decontamination system last Friday. The 4 devices include one made by a US firm to remove cesium.

The company had planned to begin the test-run with the US-made device. But the plan was delayed after the discovery of water seepage from a pipe joint and the failure of a pump to siphon water.

On Monday, TEPCO attempted to start a test-run of other devices instead, but the plan proved unfeasible.

The company is now checking if the 5-day test-run period can be shortened in a bid to start operating the system as soon as possible to prevent water from overflowing.

The radioactive water accumulating on the plant's premises could overflow in about 2 weeks. The amount is growing by the day as fresh water is being injected into the reactors in an attempt to cool them down.

TEPCO aims to recycle the treated water to cool down the reactors.

Monday, June 13, 2011 12:44 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO to test water treatment system

Tokyo Electric Power Company hopes to begin a test-run of a new system on Monday to treat highly radioactive water that is flooding facilities at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The test-run has been delayed by 3 days as problems have been found in the water treatment system that reduces the concentration of radioactive substances in the wastewater. Water seeped out at a pipe joint and a pump failed to siphon water.

TEPCO is trying to figure out the most efficient way to test the system.

It is also working on ways to shorten the scheduled 5-day test-run period so that it can start treating the contaminated water as soon as possible.

The company is aiming to use the new system to recycle the treated water for cooling the reactors.

The radioactive water accumulating on the plant's premises could overflow in about 2 weeks. Its amount is growing by the day as fresh water is being injected into the reactors to try to cool them down.

TEPCO has been transferring the contaminated water to holding facilities but it faces the likelihood of running out of space and the rainy season may aggravate the situation.

Monday, June 13, 2011 09:59 +0900 (JST)

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●Excessive levels of strontium detected in seawater

Radioactive strontium that exceeds the government-set safety level was detected for the first time in sea water in the inlet next to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, reported that strontium-90, at a level 53 times higher than the safety standard was detected in samples taken from inside an inlet used exclusively by the nuclear plant, on May 16.

TEPCO also said that strontium-90 was detected at a level 170 times higher than the standard in samples also taken on May 16, near the water intakes outside reactor number 2. At the reactor number 3 water intakes, the level was 240 times higher than the legal safety limit.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency says the result is not beyond their expectations because the substance was detected in an inlet used exclusively by the power plant. They say they will closely monitor the fish and shellfish in the affected area.

TEPCO announced that strontium-90 was also detected for the first time in ground water near the reactors' buildings.

A ground water sample taken on May 18, around reactor number 2, measured 6,300 becquerels per liter. And for reactor number one, the sample showed 22 becquerels.

TEPCO explained it usually takes about 3 weeks to analyze the samples.

With a comparatively long half-life of 29 years, radioactive strontium can accumulate in the bones if inhaled, and poses a risk of cancer.

Monday, June 13, 2011 06:03 +0900 (JST)

●Water treatment device fixed

The equipment failure that has delayed the test of a system to treat highly radioactive water at the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has apparently been resolved.

Tokyo Electric Power Company says it will carry out a test-run after checking the equipment once more on Monday.

The problem occurred with a device made by the US-based Kurion company that removes radioactive cesium.

The utility had planned to start the test run to check the device's performance on Sunday, 2 days behind the original schedule.

But when the pumps were activated prior to the test run, one of the 4 systems that is designed to move 12 and a half tons of water per hour was found to be running very slowly.

The system ran normally when operating on its own.

TEPCO suspects that a water-flow valve may have temporarily stopped functioning, and is investigating the cause.

It will operate the 4 systems simultaneously on Monday, and will start the test run if no problems are found.

The problem is expected to delay by a few days the system's full-fledged operation, originally planned for June 15th.

Sunday, June 12, 2011 23:11 +0900 (JST)

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●Measures to prevent heatstroke to be added

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says it will implement measures to prevent workers from being hit by heatstroke.

About 2,500 people work at the plant. Many of them wear protective suits and full-face masks to lower exposure to high radiation.

But the work is getting tougher physically and mentally as summer approaches. So far, 12 workers have been diagnosed as suffering from heatstroke.

Tokyo Electric Power Company will set up 7 more rest areas in addition to the 8 existing ones.

Workers can take off the protective gear, drink water, and lie down there.

In addition, the company will supply 2,500 vests containing cooling gel which will be worn underneath the gear.

1,300 face masks which provide extra air during inhalation will be secured.

The health ministry had given instructions to the utility to improve working conditions.

Sunday, June 12, 2011 11:00 +0900 (JST)

●Expert: Closer watch on marine life necessary

Professor Takashi Ishimaru of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology says the results were expected because smaller amounts of radioactive strontium have already been detected in the sea both near Fukushima Prefecture and farther away.

Although the level of strontium exceeds the government set-safety level, Ishimaru said on Sunday that the impact on the human body should be minimal because the amount is not much larger than that of cesium detected at the same time.

Strontium has properties similar to those of calcium. Ishimaru added further examination should be carried out to find whether the substance is accumulating in fish bones and other marine life.

Monday, June 13, 2011 06:03 +0900 (JST)

●Off-site centers unprepared

An NHK survey has found that most of the emergency response centers built near nuclear power plants are not properly equipped to take measures against nuclear contamination.

More than 15 billion yen, or 190 million dollars, was spent to build these so-called "off-site centers" in the wake of a criticality accident at a nuclear fuel processing plant in Tokai Village in Ibaraki Prefecture.

They are meant to be places where central and local government officials as well as police can gather and respond to nuclear accidents.

The off-site center that was built about 5 kilometers from the Fukushima Daiichi power plant was rendered nearly dysfunctional due to a rise in radiation levels after a power outage.

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The office was moved to another location within 4 days.

NHK contacted 14 off-site centers around the country, excluding those in Fukushima and Miyagi Prefectures, and asked them about their levels of preparedness.

More than 90 percent said they did not have filtering equipment in place to prevent radioactive substances from entering the buildings, as required by law.

More than 70 percent said they did not have air-lock type double doors.

Off-site centers are situated between 2 and 13 kilometers from their plants.

The survey also found that, depending on the scale of a presumed accident, some may be affected by nuclear substances and not function properly.

Although all the off-site centers have substitute facilities, 3 of these are in the same locations as the main ones, and 2 had no communications equipment installed.

The government's nuclear safety agency says it is regrettable that the off-site center in Fukushima did not function properly.

It says it plans to conduct a review of how the off-site centers should be set up, based on the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident.

Sunday, June 12, 2011 23:11 +0900 (JST)

End